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16
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ZANZIBAR—THE SPICY ISLE

BY WILLIAM ASHLEY ANDERSON

Anderson, W. A.

AS the *Aratoon Apcar*—an old acquaintance of the Bay of Bengal—drifted aimlessly into the placid roads, I suddenly learned that my table companion from Mombasa was interested in an attempt to control the sisal crop of British East Africa. So I missed the first expanding view of Zanzibar Town, for Zanzibar was but another port, while sisal is always an adventure.

Eventually we came on deck for a glimpse of the town, congested, inchoate, tumbled like a lot of concrete blocks on the dazzling coral beach and into the limelike waters. The Sultan's palace, as ugly as a Saratoga hotel, obtruded itself near the center, while dirty little alleyways ran down to the beach, where they emptied their filth into the sparkling waters among a flotsam of tatter-sailed dhows coasting from village to village with cargoes of berities, makanda mats, cloves, coral blocks, and copra. A few broad-verandaed piles hung over the sands, while right and left a sky-line of palms, thrust above a solid dark-green base, indicated the rich and tropical verdure characteristic of this isle of spice and romance.

To seaward some tiny islands were scattered like bits of polished jade upon a tray of ruffled, stained, sky-blue velvet, while in the offing the skeleton of a wreck bleaching on its rack of jagged coral gave the lie to the music of the waves whispering and licking about it.

I looked quizzically at the sisal-man.

"No fear," he said, wearily. "I'm fed up with niggers. I want to see nothing between here and Durban. My soul is satisfied with what it has seen of black Africa. Give me one-quarter per cent. on my turn-over and I'll camp on Jermyn Street for the rest of my life. Besides," he added, plaintively, "there's nothing here but spice and pestilence."

Aden, from which I had but recently departed, is a man grown gaunt and rugged in honest strife; but Zanzibar is a courtezan, whimsical, gay, sullen, presenting many aspects. Warm, rich, beautiful, concealing with dissembling art its sinister spots, it lavishes its charms, intoxicates with its beauty, smothers with its opulence; or suddenly, after a smoldering silence, it rends itself with rage. The screaming tornado rips its garments of verdure to tatters, bony-fingered pestilence goes leering down its dank alleyways, fever shakes the life out of its victims. And afterward, the bright sun sparkles upon the rain-washed foliage, and the island smiles again with the innocent radiance of a maiden.

I cleared the customs, pushing my way through a polyglot collection of Oriental and East Coast natives, and, followed by my dazed Lamu boy, shouldering my bag, plunged straight into the maze of narrow, slimy, steamy alleyways that form the thoroughfares of Zanzibar Town.

The great concrete piles of ancient Arab structures bulked overhead, closing together in places to form clumsy arches. Fronds of palms, ambitious shoots, luxuriant creepers, dripping with moisture, struggled upward to the light. The air was heavy with the rich, sweet smell of copra and the spicy tang of cloves. In and out the huge carved doors and along the stone-paved alleys, bland Khojas, wet-looking Hindus, and Parsis, carrying umbrellas and lifting their flimsy trousers or draggling *hodrunks* from the slime, made their way from

office to office on strange errands. Hamal-carts, pushed and banged and bullied along by half-naked, sweating, singing, swearing Swahilis, filled the air with noise and confusion. Bicycle bells jangled as irritable Goanese rounded unsuspected corners; birds whistled and shrieked from the housetops, and the muffled rattle of typewriters added a staccato to the concert. Amid this confusion I came to a black, richly carved door set in a vast moldy wall pierced with iron-barred rifle-ports, and recognized in this my factory and my castle.

A solemn black doorkeeper, in white *kanza* and red *tarbush*, arose at my approach and pushed open the door, and I ascended a long, dark flight of stairs through an atmosphere stifling with the odor of spices. Half-way up, these stairs gave access to my future offices, and higher still to the spacious living-quarters overhanging the coral beach and looking out upon the harbor.

It was a busy day.

From dark, hidden chambers underneath came the sound of rushing feet, bursts of shrill laughter, and uproar of tumbling reed sacks of cloves and copra, the singsong chant of the tally-clerks, panting songs; from the beach, shouts of the boatmen swinging their barges close to the shore; and from the open bay, the distant rattle of winches as the gluttonous ships gorged themselves with spices. The office presented a flurried aspect of scattered invoices and bills-of-lading, perspiring Parsis, and harried Banian clerks bending desperately over typewriters, while the factor, a bland little cockney, hopped about with innocuous energy, playing the rôle of director of the universe.

I gave him my salaams, told him my intentions, and left him to revel in his monopoly of the American spice trade, while I retired to the seclusion of the spacious veranda overlooking the "most costly roof in East Africa," and, with a woven-palm basket of juicy fruit by my side, stretched myself blissfully in a long Indian chair and smiled at the recollection of parched Aden.

Business did not immediately engross me. Certain events had transpired to fill me with a passing cynicism. But I delighted in watching the ambitious little factor outdoing himself for my edification.

He snatched control of the clove-market; he reeked of copra; he purchased a small fleet of dhows for the navigation of Victoria Nyanza; he conjured tonnage out of empty seas; he even wheedled space from the sea lords of his Britannic Majesty; he went so far as to imagine himself into a fortune based on the sale of *bêche de mer* to the Chinese epicures of New York and Frisco; and at last, bursting with a spasm of secret patriotism, he disappeared mysteriously in a small boat for the mainland, where he assumed the rôle of soldier, serving the king in swamp and jungle against von Lettow's black men. I ran across him a year later, twittering over new plans despite his black-water fever.

He was disappointed at the lack of interest shown in his dramatic departure, but this momentary cloud faded rapidly behind a flash of new interest.

"How many engagements have you been in? I've been in nineteen! And forty goes of fever! They expect me to die, you know!"

I didn't expect him to die. I knew he wouldn't. I hope to hear of him some day cornering the oyster crop to foster the walrus industry of Baffin Bay.

The humorous element in his departure, I must say, had been aggravated at the time by a good deal of irritation at the position in which I was left, for I was obliged to fill in nearly all my time with work, worry, and gusts of giddiness. Ships ceased calling; the "most costly roof in East Africa" converted itself into a sieve; and the little rains came on in great floods, soaking through the roof as though through sugar, and pouring in upon ten thousand bales of precious spices, while a plague of rats gnawed gaping holes in every carefully weighed

sack; and I began to wake to ghostly silences at night, and hear whispers in the chamber, and the waves sneering malevolently on the beach, and the stiff palm fronds cracking their knuckles, and little gusts of rain pattering over the corrugated iron roofs to spit in my face.

This was not good for me. One of my predecessors had gone through something similar, and ended by wincing with physical pain every time a wave broke on the beach, and at every step forward imagined that the earth was caving in before him. Neuralgia succeeded insomnia, and insomnia brought on neuralgia; so eventually they had to send him touring all over the world to find a place where he could sleep.

Suddenly I was tricked with a sense of the ridiculous, and the world grinned back. So I proceeded to become acquainted with my assistants and hamals.

The clove-broker was a black-bearded Khoja, soft in speech, courteous in manner, and very clever in his dealings. He wore a long black coat, soft, floppy, white-linen trousers, sandals, and an umbrella; and he took a fatherly interest in my welfare, dragging me forth to peer in darksome godowns where pungent cloves were heaped in hillocks twenty-five feet high. Breathing mysterious trade secrets and exuding cloves from every seam and fold of his voluminous garments, he drifted into the office like a dark, brooding cloud touched with bits of sunshine, and never came unwanted nor stayed too long.

Ali Bhanji, who scoured the steaming bazaars in the interests of Manchester looms, was also a Khoja, but of a different sort. Ali was bumptious. Ambition boiled within him. Dumpy and Napoleonic (save that he chewed alternately a stained mustache and betel-nut packed in lime), he clattered up and down the stairs twenty times a day, every time presenting a different countenance. Frenzied with some petty anxiety, bursting with pride over some clever stroke, slyly silent over a maturing plan, chuckling at the latest *bon mot* of the cloth-bazaar, breathing a forbidden rumor with nervous dread and delight, he filled each passing day with novelty and inspiration. Claiming me as his property, he dragged me into the bazaars to smoke sweet cigarettes with Banians, tell fabulous yarns to Khojas, sip coffee with Arabs, and pass the time of day with almost every chance-met Zanzibari. Beaming benevolently, his pock-marked face radiating good will, he would say, persuasively:

"Ah, here is the house of Jan Hansraj! Oh, how many times Jan Hansraj he say, 'You come my house'! What you think, *bwana?*" . . . And in another moment I would find myself steered into the presence of young Jan Hansraj, squatting over coffee, and exchanging compliments and yarns with him.

Now here was romance that most folk would have passed, unknowing, by; for Jan Hansraj's father financed Tipoo Tib, and Tipoo Tib was the great Zanzibar Arab who fought over and conquered, in his search for ivory (white and black), all that vast territory which stretches from the head waters of the Congo and the Nile to the waters of the Indian Ocean between Cape Delgado and Mogadishe. This Tipoo Tib was the chief support and guide of Stanley in his perambulations about Central Africa; and prime factor in the rescue of Emin Pasha, who was reluctantly obliged to abdicate from the inner Sudan when Gordon was awaiting with cynical amusement the fate that finally engulfed him at Khartoum.

So the tales I heard nonchalantly spoken between weaving wreaths of cigarette smoke and over cardamom-flavored coffee of white ivory and black, of piratical dhows and sinister court intrigues, of the seething slave-market around the corner, and the great *safaris* that gathered at Bagamoyo on the mainland across the way and vanished into the heart of the Black Continent for twelve and fourteen years at a stretch—these tales were such as you hear over nargheli amid the babble of the bazaar,

but can never, never remember to repeat in prose.

I saw much of the tangled, slimy, tawdry, teeming bazaar in Ali's company. He was a good tutor, omitting nothing, as might a finicky Parsi, anxious not to offend a sahib's nice taste or corrupt his own. He jibbered and grunted, and nodded his head solemnly, or grinned maliciously, and initiated me in all the mysteries. Once he even took me to look at his sister, though I promised to pretend I saw nothing. Down an alley in the tin-bazaar we passed a certain shop.

"There, *bwana*, look! It is she!"

Squatting on the floor near the door of the shop, with a nearly naked baby, tubby and tattered with tinsel and baubles, tumbling about her, Ali's sister presented a lovely picture. Her complexion was warm and delicately glowing; her hair, black and smooth, seemed to glisten with life; while her large eyes gazed with abstraction down the teeming thoroughfare. There was about her an air of pensive melancholy, of unrest, of suppressed fire, that was tempered and rendered beautiful by the cold cameo fineness of her features, the undisturbed tranquillity of her pose.

Ali twitched nervously at my elbow, no doubt regretting his indiscretion, and I passed on, wondering at the destiny that left such genuine beauty to grow up in darkness in the back alley of a bazaar —to rear brown brats whose whole object in life would be to sell shoddy cloth, bits of tin and sweetmeats, and to haggle shrilly over pice. . . .

Zanzibar Town is the great metropolis of the East Coast. It is Rome to the dusky pilgrim; it is Paris to the reckless wanderers from the Bantu folk of Cape Delgado to the sons of the corsairs of Oman. Its clubs; its coffee-shops; its cinemas; its dark, arched rooms where dusky belles from India, Arabia, the Somali Coast, and Zanzibar giggle and shrill and dance monotonous dances; its spreading mango-trees under whose shelter the torches burn, and the tom-toms beat the measure of night-long *ngomai;* its shops tumbling with riches of roughly carved ivory and ebony, or hammered Cingalese silver and gems; its bazaars, gaudy with cheap cloth—*kikoys, hodrunks, kanzas*—bright with prints of flags and ships and emblems of royalty; the great ships lying in its roads, pouring into the lap of black Africa the increasing luxuries of Europe; the dhows bearing commerce from the Persian Gulf, the Seychelles, and Madagascar—all, all and more, contribute to the renown and lure of Zanzibar.

Whether it is a Hindu wedding glistening with tinsel, colored lights, and mock armor, with frightened boy bridegroom and smug, patronizing sire, or a visit to the great Mohammedan club in a grove of mangoes by a beach on the outskirts of town where adolescent Hindus ape the manners of Eton and Harrow on the cricket-pitch—"Oah, well played, sare! Bowled! *Bowled*, sare!"—or an expedition with Mohammed, darting in and out among the stately dhows from Muscat, looking over likely bargains in teakwood tonnage, or some adventurous quest down dark, whispering alleys at night with a companion still rolling on his sea legs—each page contained a new story for me. But always the moral was the same, and the moral was Ixion's, "Adventures are to the adventurous."

The life of the bazaar is a peculiar thing. To the philosopher it is mostly very broad human comedy; but occasionally there is presented some tragic circumstance, violent and inexplicable, that leaves a lingering memory of color and flame and troubled questioning. The inexplicable fascinates but never satisfies.

For instance, one day there was a hubbub in the bazaar—rifle-shots, banging doors, shouts, a loud, rising hum—and this is what occurred:

Two sepoys, coming away from Beyt-el-Ajaib, the palace of the Sultan, struck by a sudden madness, turned into the bazaar. At the shop of Damoder Jerab they found the inoffensive Khoja mana-

ger sitting on a stool, calm and contented. One of the sepoys coolly raised his rifle and shot the unsuspecting man in his fat stomach. Instantly the bazaar was in a quivering panic. Shutters went up with a clatter; the brass-studded doors closed with muffled bangs; and all in the alleys scampered to shelter like frightened rabbits. A wet Banian—brother of beasts and bugs, who would have thought it as great a crime to kill a rat as his own grandmother—trying to slip unseen down a dark, moist alleyway, palpitating with terror, was discovered by the sardonic gaze of the sepoy, and a second bullet flew. It struck the Banian in the chest, and knocked him with a faint whimper into a muddied drain.

There were stirrings, whisperings, choked cries, tinkle of silver, and rattle of brasses behind the dank walls. In an instant the narrow wet alleyways were deserted, save for a few old men and women too stunned to move quickly, and some children, lost in the swift panic. Four women, coming to an upper window to look down into the stirring bazaar, made a pretty, colorful picture under a Byzantine arch with a drab background. They were terrified with anxiety for their children, but one of the sepoy's bullets scattered them like bits of bright plumage.

Ali Bhanji, who was of course on hand, saw his child in the street and rushed out to draw him to safety just as another small boy, seeing all doors closing about him, flung himself against Dharsey's great brass-studded portal, crying out:

"Mohammed Ali Dharsey, open the door! Open the door, Mohammed Ali Dharsey! Help me! Open the door!"

While the little fellow beat frantically at the black carved door, behind which the merchants wrung their hands helplessly, the sepoy turned with a flashing smile and shot him.

When the two had expended their ammunition they went on a short distance, conversing calmly together till they came to a convenient *barasa* at the door of a shop kept by an old woman. They told her to shut her door, and when she had done this and the street was clear, sitting down a short distance apart, they raised their rifles and fired simultaneously at each other, both falling mortally wounded. . . . So these two hillmen, born and reared in some remote hamlet—perhaps on the snowy slopes of the Himalayas—when the blood madness came upon them, found their deaths in the steaming bazaars of Zanzibar. . . .

"Phew!" said Ali, mopping his brow as he finished giving me his version. "How very near you not can able make business to-day! Suppose I deaded! No broker, no *shauri!* Eh, *bwana?* . . ."

And, after consideration, I do think the head office would have been a bit querulous at any unwarranted delay caused thereby.

The man I most liked was Hadji Mahomet ben Ali, a pure-blooded Arab from the Yemen. There was no compromise about the Hadji; he had a solid, downright character, bluff, direct manner, formed his opinions after brief consideration, and acted with decision. He was a hamal contractor, engaged in supplying stevedores, hamals, and women to sort and clean cloves and copra, drag the stuff in carts from end to end of the town, load it in barges, and stow it in the holds of the big ships swinging in the roads. To carry on this work successfully he had to have keen perception, initiative, and a profound knowledge of the native laborer.

Often at night when the "most costly roof in East Africa" suddenly became porous under a beating rain, threatening the destruction of thousands of sacks of cloves, I would send a messenger—old, black, blear-eyed Belalli, in a nightgown, sandals, and red *tarbush;* Belalli, a pensioner, and once about the best ivory expert on the Black Continent—I would send him searching for Mahomet ben Ali, scurrying through the drenching downpour, as anxious over the cloves as a parvenu over a string of pearls.

Presently into the darkness of my room

would come the Hadji, silent and grave, his black beard dripping moisture, his smoldering eyes steady under the sopping turban, the hilt of his dagger gleaming with the wet.

"*Maharabah!*" he would greet me. "What is the trouble now, *effendi?*" . . . And within twenty minutes the big godowns would be reverberating with the shouts and songs of coolies struggling in the glow of huge, blazing lights to clear the threatened cloves.

Whenever I ran into the Hadji at the clove-market I spent many pleasant moments with him discussing the world and its people. Looking through the overflowing godowns out to the open bay where the great three-masted teakwood dhows congregated from every corner of the Indian Ocean, and the rusted iron steamships, worn with wartime's trafficking, tugged wearily at their chains, and the small battered fishermen's craft and outriggers from the mainland drifted about like chance-blown autumn leaves, we swung our heels under a hamal-cart and let the world pass in review.

We both knew Arab and Jewish traders in Aden and along the Somali Coast, and had dealings with Parsi merchants of Bombay. Mahomet had been a veritable Sinbad.

He indicates a little, weary, homesick group squatting by the shelter of a wall, gazing out to sea or stealing curious glances at the all-important Indians and the black Swahilis shuffling and lounging past. They are Arabs from Oman, three youths and a girl. She is unveiled and has the wild, clean-featured beauty of the desert, with large, liquid eyes, and a skin that is warm and fresh; while the youths, comely and lithe, are plainly anxious to be off again. One glance tells us they have come in a dhow from the Persian Gulf, picking their way among the stars across the waste of the Indian Ocean, trusting to Allah and every chance wind that blew.

Envy rises in me. I, too, should like to sail those seas, master of my dhow and a plaything of the winds—to take my chance with Kismet on the open waters, while my heart leaped with life.

I suggest this to the Hadji, and he smites his thigh: "Allah! Allah! We will do this, *effendi!* You and I, we will."

But I already foresee my departure in a big, rattling, lopsided transport packed with blacks in khaki, with web kits stuffed with cartridges. But sometime, Hadji, sometime!

Beside these three, there were my insolent black overseer, Adbaraka, always short of money, haughty with the women among whom he imagined himself an Arab, yet proud of his work; and dear old Belalli, shuffling, mumbling, laughing Belalli, gentle and anxious as a grandmother, and loyal as a dog; and Ali, my boy, afflicted with elephantiasis, dragging a foot the size of a gate-post, till I gave him a hut and took on his rogue of a brother in his place; and Eimzi, chief of the hamals, with the body of a Hercules and the good-nature of a puppy, despite a gash across his face from ear to chin—a memento of happy, care-free days in Muscat. They were all good children, and gave sufficient anxiety and amusement to fit every mood.

Never was there a tedious moment from the hour of singing dawn when I awakened to the greeting of the dusky damsels who brought the water for my bath, their broad splayed feet flip-flopping on the stone floor, their eyes rolling roguishly under the dripping vessels poised on their kinky heads, the great red and yellow buttons in their stretched ears gleaming against vast expanses of bare brown skin, their flimsy colored *hodrunks* drawn tight about their swaying bodies, and their betel-stained gums showing in broad grins as each called in turn: "*Jambo, bwana!* Peace, master! *Jambo! Jambo! Jambo!*" . . . This, and the warm light pouring through the arches, the twittering of the love-birds on the roofs, the distant songs of boatmen

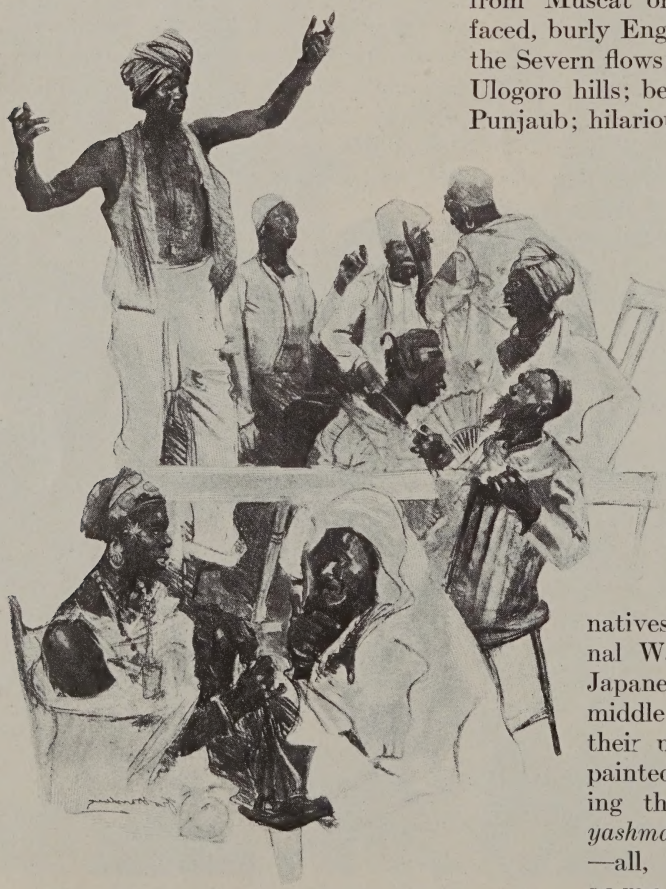
Drawn by George Harding

A POLYGLOT THRONG FILLS THE MAZE OF NARROW ALLEYWAYS

swinging to their oars, the call of bugles across the waters, a banging of doors and bolts, and little bursts of shrill laughter from the women in the godown below; and Ali, apologetic because of his big foot, bearing a tray of pineapples, oranges, bananas, and mangoes, still cool with the dew of night—all these indicate dawn, and another day. . . . And thence onward each hour was filled with its appropriate adventure, until at last night came and crowned them all. Oh, the nights of Zanzibar—wild nights, weird nights, nights full of charm and harmony!

The old days are passing when an adventure in the dark bazaars ended often in the "Hough!" of a dagger struck home, the thud of a falling body, the broken sigh of a defeated soul. It may still end so; but the intriguing mind finds other distractions, and long-cloaked figures crowned in high red *tarbushes* keep the law—within radius of the glow of arc-lights. Besides, there are sufficient diversions beyond the walls of harems and the divans of the gamblers—the coffee-stalls sell pink and yellow soda-water, bottled by Hindus; electric lights make bright spots about the *sukhs* where farmer and fisherman dump their wares and romance still survives. One day I saw a small fish, which a fisherman had sold for seven pice, retailed for seven thousand rupees because it was discovered that Allah had inscribed its scales with a sacred phrase from the Koran!

On every night within a canvas temple—where gather wrinkled Arab sailors from Muscat or Madagascar, or red-faced, burly English sailors from where the Severn flows; black askaris from the Ulogoro hills; bearded sepoys from the Punjaub; hilarious Tommies from Battersea, or precise Parsis in linen dusters with round, varnished hats; squatting, half-naked Banians with loincloths tucked between their knees; Goanese dressed like mid-Victorians and speaking Portuguese; Swahilis in red *tarbushes* and white *kanzas* and immeasurable grins across their black faces; natives of Seychelles; aboriginal Wahadimu; Khojas, and Japanese—old, young, and middle-aged, their children, their mistresses, and giggling painted ones, coquettishly rolling their eyes behind their *yashmaks* or brazenly unveiled—all, all await with the same emotions the coming of the god. And the high



THE HIGH PRIEST WAVES FOR SILENCE

priest, standing on a chair, waves for silence.

He is sightless in one eye, his cratered face indicating that smallpox was to blame. Old blue-and-white striped pantaloons and well-worn sandals, a discarded tweed waistcoat, a dirty, badly rolled turban, set him off and lend dignity to the impressively raised hands as he makes his announcements in a cracked voice in four languages, ending with Kis-swahili and English:

"*Juma-na-moja, walu wote watacuja hopa!* Shahli Shaplin!!! *Cheka-cheka-cheka!* ...Satterday ni-ight, shentlemens will all come! New progrom! Sharley Shaplin! Llarf-larf-larf!..."

And the babel of languages suddenly becomes harmony. Each understands all, and all understand to the depths the great roar that shakes the temple walls when a figure—mainly boots, a stick, a little bowler hat, a mustache, and a vitalizing spark—suddenly appears on the wall, trips, and lands on its chin amid Californian scenery.

DUSKY DAMSELS BROUGHT THE WATER FOR MY BATH

This is the common meeting-ground for all the world.

I spent decorous nights at the club, drinking Childs cocktails in deference to a man whom I regarded with whimsical respect—the same who was instrumental in laying ten miles of toy railroad along the coral beach, through the crowded bazaar, and among the palms to the toy village of Bu-bu-bu—but avoiding the bridge-tables where liver patients tested their symptoms; and dined with boastful little traders, or fed-up soldiers, or blasé administrators; or spent hours over ancient periodicals from London. Sometimes I dined in the uniform of Piccadilly with people of importance and discussed high topics cleverly. More often I followed my natural inclinations and made merry in neighboring messes, or my own, where, gathered about pianos, we sang sentimental ditties and mournful lays. Our favorite haunt was the home of a man from Detroit.

The first floor of the great barrack where he lived was filled with oil and rare petroleum products. But on the third floor were his rooms, littered with delicately carved bits of ivory on ebony stands, old armor and rare weapons, lace and silk, tasteful pictures, and a piano, while in a neighboring room were all the essential adjuncts to conviviality. According to the occasion, whether a birthday or one of those fêtes that bring memories of a land obscured by distance, we partook of liqueur cocktails, mint juleps, or champagne punch, and made the starry welkin tremble with songs of long trails and cozy little homes. They were quaint parties.

"Bob" and "Ascot"—the former red-faced and grinning with fresh curly hair tousled over merry blue eyes, the latter tanned and gloomy of aspect, though possessed of a somber devil—both fresh from the rocking bridges of their respective commands, little storm-tossed sister ships, inseparables, who poked their

noses in every bay or delta along the Germanee coast, hunting for trouble and finding it; "Catchy Boy," with young and smiling face, quizzical, sun-bleached blue eyes, and hair prematurely gray from nocturnal jungle tête-à-têtes with truculent Germanees, unconverted black men, and inquiring beasts of predatory kinds; the Little Trader with the big voice who, in serious moods, shook the markets on flying visits from Tananarivo in Madagascar to Kisumu on Victoria Nyanza; the Man from Detroit at the piano, smiling, debonair, large of girth and big of heart, with "the latest" (two years old) at his finger-tips—the group of us would hang arm-in-arm about the piano, heads thrust forward, eyes strained to read the words, while "Bob" howled:

"For—just—one—day-an'-one-night
You—were—muh—dream-uv-deelight
Till—you—fay—ded-away
With—thuh—light-uv-thuh-day. . . . "

All heads would come up with a jerk, faces turn raptly to the twinkling sky, mouths gape wide in one simultaneous movement, and a melancholy wail tremble on the balmy air:

"Ohn—Lake—Champlain! . . ."

One such night we spent at the bishop's house. Under a soaring moon, with soft magnolia-scented breezes blowing from the whispering sea, and the Sultan's black band filling the air with the languorous strains of tropic music, the stridency of life seemed to pass away. Drifting across the dancing-space with an attractive, dreamy-eyed damsel resting in my arms, and the notes of "La Paloma," so soft they mingled with the murmur of the waves, and the wind stirring through the palm fronds and laughing amid the waxy leaves of the clove-trees, beating tenderly on my receptive heart—these, I felt, were moments that gave life its sweetness. Piquant thrills were for other times.

Yet as night blew on and raindrops began to spit from a black, heaving sky, and the crowded frolickers began to vanish in rickshaws and quaint vehicles through the dark shadows of the surrounding groves, there came a cry from out a dark lane. "Catchy Boy" and I, arriving together from different points, discovered an old-fashioned closed carriage ditched in the bushes, with a pair of overturned horses floundering and struggling in their traces. Black terrified footmen in scarlet coats jumped about with flickering link-lights. A beam disclosed a silk-clad leg thrust through the shattered glass of the door; and a charming face, flushed and disheveled, lifted itself from the wreckage, exclaiming, petulantly:

"Damme! This *is* a pretty pickle!"

"Catchy Boy" and I crossed glances in the dim light, and, struck by the same thought, he drew an imaginary snuff-box and exclaimed, softly:

"Zounds! me lord. Sure, 'tis no proper night for wenches to take the road from Bath without escort."

So we delivered them from the ditch and set them safe upon their way.

Peruque's dance I remember chiefly because of an incident. It was a dance and supper in Victoria Gardens, where the ladies of the Sultan's harem formerly bathed. It was a charming affair, with the sole contretemps of a baby hippopotamus blundering in among the tables and chairs and disporting on the dance-floor until persuaded to leave by fifteen determined natives with ropes.

But the best nights of all were at home, when the babbling city had sunk reluctantly into silence.

My huge old Arab house had the reputation of being haunted. Unfortunately, I cannot prove this; but every night at two in the morning I awakened and lay for many minutes listening to the few faint sounds that tapped musically upon the bell of silence—the everlasting whispers and laughter of the waves upon the beach, the tap-tap-tap of death's-head beetles in the berities of the ceiling, the rustling movement of rats, the clear silver tinkle of ships' bells

Drawn by George Harding

GREAT SHIPS POURING INTO AFRICA THE LUXURIES OF EUROPE

THESE LANES ARE TRAVERSED

BY SWAYING BULLOCK-CARTS

in the harbor, the unexpected rattle of a chain, far off the plaintive shriek of a lemur, the stirring of palm fronds outside my window. Turning my head, I could look out through the porticos across the water, silvery under the moon, with red and white and green lights glowing from the gray shadows of ships. A pale brooding moon sometimes gazed at me from behind a fan of palms; and then ghosts would truly steal about me, tender, ministering ghosts—memories of other days and dim dreams that may yet come true. In their arms I'd sink again to sleep.

Stretching behind the venal town, which is huddled upon a spit of land, the rolling, embowered hills rise high and higher to the northward upon their coral base, until, near the little village of Mkokotoni at the northern end of the island, an outcropping of genuine strata has lifted itself a thousand feet above the blue seas.

Never have I seen a more beautiful or richer island, except perhaps moody Oahu. Rolling, verdant hills and gentle valleys with sweet, clear water and a teeming wealth of fruit and palm; broad, curving bays upon whose dazzling coral beaches the iridescent waters toss a feathery white fringe of surf—make a setting for the ruins of old castles, smothered under all-embracing creepers, and the deep-arched Arab houses on the *shambas*.

The ruins tell tales of days when the black Zang potentates yielded sovereignty of the seas to the questing Portuguese who rounded the Cape in the fifteenth century; and of the later days of dark, passionate struggle when the Imams of Muscat shattered the might of Portugal from Mogadishe to Kilwa, a small port now, but then a place of many mosques. With the passing of the day of Tipoo Tib *that* power, too, has since passed away, for the present swarthy, black-bearded Sultan, though he smiles sardonically as he rides quietly forth to take the evening air, has no illusions as to the extent of his might. For the power of the Sayids has now passed. "Bob" and "Ascot" and "Catchy Boy" and myself—we now uphold the Raj!

You would not think it to see us spinning along narrow coraline lanes hedged wi h groves of coconut and glistening fragrant clove-trees—the Man from Detroit asleep in the limousine, making a pillow for "Bob" and "Ascot," who snore softly, each on a shoulder, lulled by the hum of the motor, the soporific fragrance of the air, the soothing motion of the car as it dips and swerves and soars, and the rush of balminess that pours about us, while the slim Goanese driver keeps his eyes on the road, and I let my dreamy gaze wander afield.

These lanes are traversed only by swaying bullock-carts, sleepy jackasses, white trotting Muscat donkeys, and Swahilis on foot carrying on their heads large green baskets woven with palm and overflowing with fruit. Occasionally striking hoofs awaken echoes, and an Arab, mounted on a blooded horse, comes dancing by, gravely saluting as his steed curvets and rears, maintaining

EACH HOUR WAS FILLED WITH ITS APPROPRIATE ADVENTURE

INSTANTLY THE BAZAAR WAS IN A PANIC SCAMPERING TO SHELTER

with dignity the ancient principle that the mounted man is the superior man. This is a *shamba* owner—one of the old stock of Arabs who have divided the island into great plantations where they cultivate the clove and coconut, and such things of lesser importance as the aloe. They were great aristocrats in the days of slaves, but, now that the Swahilis are nominally independent, it's a different matter. Greasy Hindus, squating in the bazaars, advance money on prospective crops—and the Arab, who cares nothing for to-morrow, is gracefully yielding his estates to a more wily civilization.

Along the roads are little villages, clusters of huts with walls of mud plastered on intertwined poles and withes, with roofs of palm thatch. Screens stand about on which hang manioc drying in the sun; and on broad reed *makandas* under the trees the drying meat of the coconut shrinks from the shell to form copra, while the last fragrant pistils of the clove crop are spread on mats near by. By some of the huts are *barasas*, or mud platforms, on which Hindu traders lounge, trading odd bits of tin, beads, cigarettes, and sweets, for cloves and copra filched by the native from his Arab master.

Naked children, a few chickens and guinea-fowls, a goat or two, and occasionally a bullock, wander about the huts or tumble over one another under the shelter of umbrageous mango-trees littering the ground with succulent fruit. The lanes are lined with trees—mango, banyan, palm (the courtly coconut; the betel, dainty and proud as an aigrette; and the sensible sago), spreading jackfruit, clumps of bamboo, and groves of clove dotted with pink clusters of aromatic mother-of-clove. Through the clean, dark-green foliage of the cloves, or over gray tumbled walls overlaid with soft yellow, red, and green moss and lichen, deep red-tiled or iron-gray roofs and the curves of deep arches where the Arabs keep their wonted state.

The native Swahilis of the plantations are still only semi-independent, as they depend on the *shambas* for work and wages, while the government regulates their movements. But with a little cash, a machete to cut cane, and a hoe to scratch a patch of soil, they live in

plenty and contentment. Juicy pineapples and mealy bananas grow wild, and are regarded as weeds on the *shambas*, while the mango drops its fruit broadcast, and orange-trees scatter their golden crop by the roadside.

Over brimming brooks, around emerald hillsides, by the side of dazzling bays, along the edge of bluffs from whose heights we can see the fisher-craft darting about like water-spiders on the calm surface, we come to tempting spots—Mkokotoni and Chwaka, where there are a few bungalows. Here we picnic and bathe. It is delicious water, and to bathe in it is like flinging yourself in the arms of amorous Dawn.

I have often swum at night, too, far out among the vessels in the harbor of Zanzibar Town, every stroke weaving a garment of phosphorous about me, and in the pleasure of the swim forgetting all too soon the lesson I learned from Aden's sand-sharks.

To the glories of this island the European seems blind and indifferent. He plays golf and tennis conventionally at Mnazi Moja, the sports club on the edge of the town; but beyond this, unless he is a soldier and *must*, he will not venture except to picnic for a few hours. He does not seem able to tear himself away from the pathetic prattle and tame delights of the club, or proximity to the Resident, whose favors are like fickle fortune, or, perhaps, the companionship of others of their kind and dalliance among the few white ladies whom the fate of their husbands has drawn to the island.

Argumentatively, I once made this opinion public.

"My dear chap, don't be silly," said the doctor, glaring over a whisky-and-soda. "White men can't stand it—malaria—dysentery—fever—damn rot."

I pointed out that as a soldier I had lived weeks at a time in the country, in its most disreputable and deadly parts, and had grown heavy on it.

"That may be," said a young administrator, "but you forget that this is only a protectorate. We must look after the interests of the present landowners, you know. We can't take their property from them."

"But Hindu usurers may?" I suggested. "No. The trouble is this. You've got a nice little island here, and you all have nice little jobs, and you don't trouble your little heads a single thought more than the exigencies of the service demand. You don't want to popularize the island because you couldn't stand official competition. You've got ice-plants, a ten-mile railroad, soda-water establishments, electric lights."

"Well, dash it! after all, that's something."

"It is," I admit—blandly, I suspect. "But all those things were started by traders, mostly American."

"Well, why don't *you* go in for planting?"

There he had me.

I looked from the balcony out across the bay, at the monitor squatting in the roads, at a black Ellerman freighter unloading into red barges, at a plume of smoke on the horizon, and at the clouds banked low over the African mainland. I was particularly fascinated by that bank of distant clouds. The rumbling of the vessels and the din of the bazaar rose to my ears, filling them with a dull buzzing, while I seemed to smell the heady smell of a ship's hold. Suddenly I knew that in another month this island would be but a memory.

"Ah, well, the island is yours," I said. "There are other things for me to do; and, after all, I am somewhat of a visitor. I have seen it; I know it pretty well, and I like it. But *toujours* there is something else to be done first."

Toujours the open road and a free heel; *toujours* a flowing sheet, and the long slope of the seas.

THE DAIMYO'S BOWL

BY DONALD CORLEY

HIRO-TANI the Potter sat in the door of his shop and pondered as he gazed at the evening sea that lay over the lost city of Thoë. The sun had spilled upon the sea a glaze that swam and splashed and changed with the evening wind. How wonderful it would be to dip a new-made platter into it and catch the glaze! Hiro-tani thought—the glaze that was the sunset of the city of Thoë. . . . The sun went out like a stifled coal and the glaze faded into the quiet water.

This was the burden of Hiro-tani the Potter.

Two days before, a horseman had halted at the door of his shop, bearing a Wish-command from the daimyo whose pleasure-garden lay along the slope of a near-by hill like an embroidered silken fabric upon a woman's shoulder.

TO THE POTTERS OF THE PROVINCE OF SALAN

Make for me a bowl like the moon,
That I may drink rice wine from it.
A green bowl as clear as spring water
And as thin as incense smoke.
A green bowl shaped
As a young woman's breast. . . .
A bowl so strong
That boiling tea will not crack it.
So green as to be the moon
In a darkened room. . . .
So thin that the wind will sing in it
When it is empty. . . .

And to some potters had been granted fourteen days, to some nine, and to some five days, according to their skill, but to Hiro-tani the Potter only three days were given, ending with the coming of the Second Moon of spring.

Of the lesser potters a few had fled the province; some had tried, failed, and were executed, and their heads impaled over the daimyo's gate. Others had been judged of no consequence.

When the moon hangs like a lantern
Above the Hills of the Haunters . . .
Set the bowl afloat upon the little stream
Beyond my garden wall . . .
That it may come to me in my tea-house
Lighted by the moon. . . .

So ended the daimyo's Wish-command to Hiro-tani the Potter. It was whispered by the horseman that the daimyo wished such a bowl against the maturage of the spring rice wine, which he tasted first, as lord of the province, each year.

The daimyo was all-powerful; if the bowl were not ready for the risen moon, Hiro-tani well knew that his own head would frighten evil spirits from the gate of the daimyo's garden, impaled upon a bamboo pole, and he was the last potter of Salan but the First Potter of the Empire.

Now Hiro-tani the Potter, albeit the son of a Samurai, had been born with the flame-stain of fear upon his shoulder, and for this reason the Samurai, his father, had not scrupled to disfavor him, until by some act he should prove the blood that was in him. And for this he had become a potter, wandering in distant lands, seeking the test of his courage.

And for this he went often by day (though never by night) into the Hills of the Haunters, where none dared, to a secret place that he had found, where fine porcelain-clay oozed from a crevice of the rocks, for the love of his clay-craft was strongest in him; and it was for this that he dwelt upon the sea-edge of the lost city of Thoë, which he had chosen to